

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2007

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 LHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Forest Legacy Program. As you begin the process of drafting the FY 08 Interior Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$100 million for the LWCF state grants program, \$220 million for the federal LWCF program and \$100 million for the Forest Legacy Program. As our communities address the pressures that new development is putting on their remaining recreation lands, often by voting for increased land conservation spending, we are committed to working with local mayors, county commissioners and state officials to assist their efforts. The Forest Legacy and LWCF programs provide key federal assistance for our communities.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund and Forest Legacy programs have historically been the most significant federal sources of funding to support land conservation. Additionally, these funds support parks and recreation projects that protect America's natural heritage and increase the health and quality of life for all Americans.

For the past 40 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped to ensure the permanent protection of critical lands in our national forests, recreation areas, parks, wildlife refuges, Civil War battlefields and historic sites. Equally important, it has provided matching funds to support countless state park and recreation projects in thousands of communities in every state in the nation. The Forest Legacy program was created as part of the 1990 Farm bill and assists states in conserving working forestland that is threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. Over the past 15 years, it has prevented the loss of over 1 million acres of forest and leveraged an equal amount of state, local and private funding for every federal dollar spent.

In every state in the nation, LWCF and Forest Legacy Program funds have ensured that all Americans have access to lands where they can hunt, fish, play ball, hike, bird watch, paddle a canoe or ride a bike. Working only with landowners who are willing sellers, federal, state and local agencies are working to protect the best of what remains so that future generations can also

reap the benefits of access to outdoor recreation, America's unique historic and cultural sites and protected wildlife.

While we appreciate the challenges that the Subcommittee faces in a difficult budget year, we are sure that you will recognize the importance of these programs. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee in the coming months to ensure that these programs are adequately funded in FY 08 so that the federal government can maintain its commitment to conservation. This funding will help to ensure that critical park and recreation lands throughout the nation are not lost forever.

As Americans enjoy our nation's forests, parks and wildlife refuges this summer, we urge you to provide the funding levels necessary to conserve precious and threatened places throughout the country.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Tom Lill

Jim Gull

Rust Helt

Jim Ingram

Henry E. Brown

Jim Oberstar

George Miller

Jack Rahall

Barry Gordon

John Hall

Betty Sutton

Meredith Michael

Brad Sherman

Jim Saxton

Donald M. Payne

Barry L. Berk

Burt Gordon

David Nadler

Cheri Smith

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Mark Linder

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